

"Bread and Circuses"

Mired in heat and dust and sand
Gallant band of brothers true
Country's service is their aim
Death and maiming is their due

In where angels fear to tread
Foolish, dreaded leaders rush
Bringing power's fearsome groan
Leaving only graveyard's hush

"By the pricking of my thumbs"
This way comes the wicked pawn
Drunk with drinking conquest's draught
Juggernaut goes crushing on

Won with honest trifles' lure
Still so sure in dwindling light
Now betrayed in consequence
Of the senseless, needless fight

Can this be the path they chose?
How can those who serve inquire?
Why has this rough beast come 'round
To be drowned and born in fire?

Stillborn monster, undead thing!
Still we sing your praises high.
They about to die salute
And saluting, fight and die.

Hear the crowd's roar! Feel the heat
Of the meat now roasting slow.
Do they die for reasons known?
Or for only pomp and show?

Who has wavered; who stands fast
'Till the last good soul goes free?
Who says "he" and who says "she?"
Who but thee and who but me.

Michael Murry, "The Misfortune Teller," Copyright 2004